



## Hawaii State Department of Health

### Disease Investigation Branch

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## Typhoid fever

### What is typhoid fever?

Typhoid fever is an illness caused by *Salmonella* Typhi bacteria. These bacteria infect the intestine and sometimes the blood.

### How do you get it?

You can get typhoid fever by eating or drinking food or water contaminated with *Salmonella* Typhi. These bacteria are released in the stools of infected people. Typhoid fever is a major problem in many developing countries where shellfish is taken from sewage-contaminated waters and where fruits and vegetables are fertilized with human waste. Contaminated milk and dairy products can also be sources of the illness. Flies can move the bacteria on to food, especially when garbage and feces are not disposed of properly.

### What are the symptoms of typhoid fever?

Typical symptoms include sustained fever, headaches, diarrhea (uncommon) or constipation, fatigue, and rose-colored spots on the body. The symptoms can be mild or very severe.

### When do the symptoms start?

The symptoms usually begin 1 to 3 weeks after infection with the bacteria. However, the beginning of illness depends on the size of the infecting dose and may vary widely among different people.

### For how long is a person contagious?

An infected person can be contagious to others from several days to several years. About 2 to 5 percent of people who get typhoid fever go on to become long-term carriers of the bacteria.

### What is the treatment for typhoid fever?

Medicines can be prescribed to treat typhoid fever.

### Is there a vaccine for typhoid fever?

Yes. However, routine vaccination with typhoid fever vaccine is not recommended for the general population. Vaccination should be considered for household members of known carriers and for persons traveling to, or living in, developing countries where typhoid fever is common.

### Should persons with typhoid fever stay away from work or school?

Yes, persons ill with diarrhea should stay home from work or school. Ill persons and their close contacts who work in food handling, health care or child/elderly care, must get permission from their doctor before returning to work. Infected people in other occupations who are not having diarrhea may return to work or school, but they must wash their hands often, especially after using the toilet.

### How can you keep from getting it?

Wash your hands carefully after using the toilet and especially before preparing or eating food.

Do not drink **raw** (unpasteurized) milk or milk products

Do not eat **raw** shellfish (clams, oysters, mussels, crabs, etc.). Boil or thoroughly cook all shellfish.

Do not drink from any untreated water supply (streams, lakes, ponds, etc.). Boil or chemically treat drinking water if you are not sure it is safe.

When traveling internationally to areas where typhoid fever is common, get immunized.

For more information, see the CDC's website at [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/typhoidfever\\_g.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/typhoidfever_g.htm)